

3 March 2022

Dear Chairs and members of the Government Administration & Elections Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB No. 184, An Act Extending Through November 8, 2022, Several Changes Regarding Election Administration as a Result of COVID-19 and Concerning Eligibility to Vote by Absentee Ballot. This bill allows COVID-19 to be a valid reason to use absentee ballots for the November 2022 election.

While COVID-19 numbers currently, thankfully, are low, we have learned by experience that this disease is unpredictable, and at least twice before when we thought the pandemic was over, we had spikes, making people anxious about congregating in public, especially indoors. Additionally, even with numbers being low, people who are immunosuppressed, such as myself, are at higher risk from COVID-19, and so have concerns about gathering in public, especially as mask mandates are going away.

This means people may be anxious about going to a polling place to vote.

The right to vote is fundamental to our system of democracy and we should not make people have to decide between exercising that right and their health. Recent elections proved that making COVID-19 a valid reason to vote absentee did not harm the voting process in any way. Rather, it enabled people to feel safe exercising this fundamental right.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Abigail Roth

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